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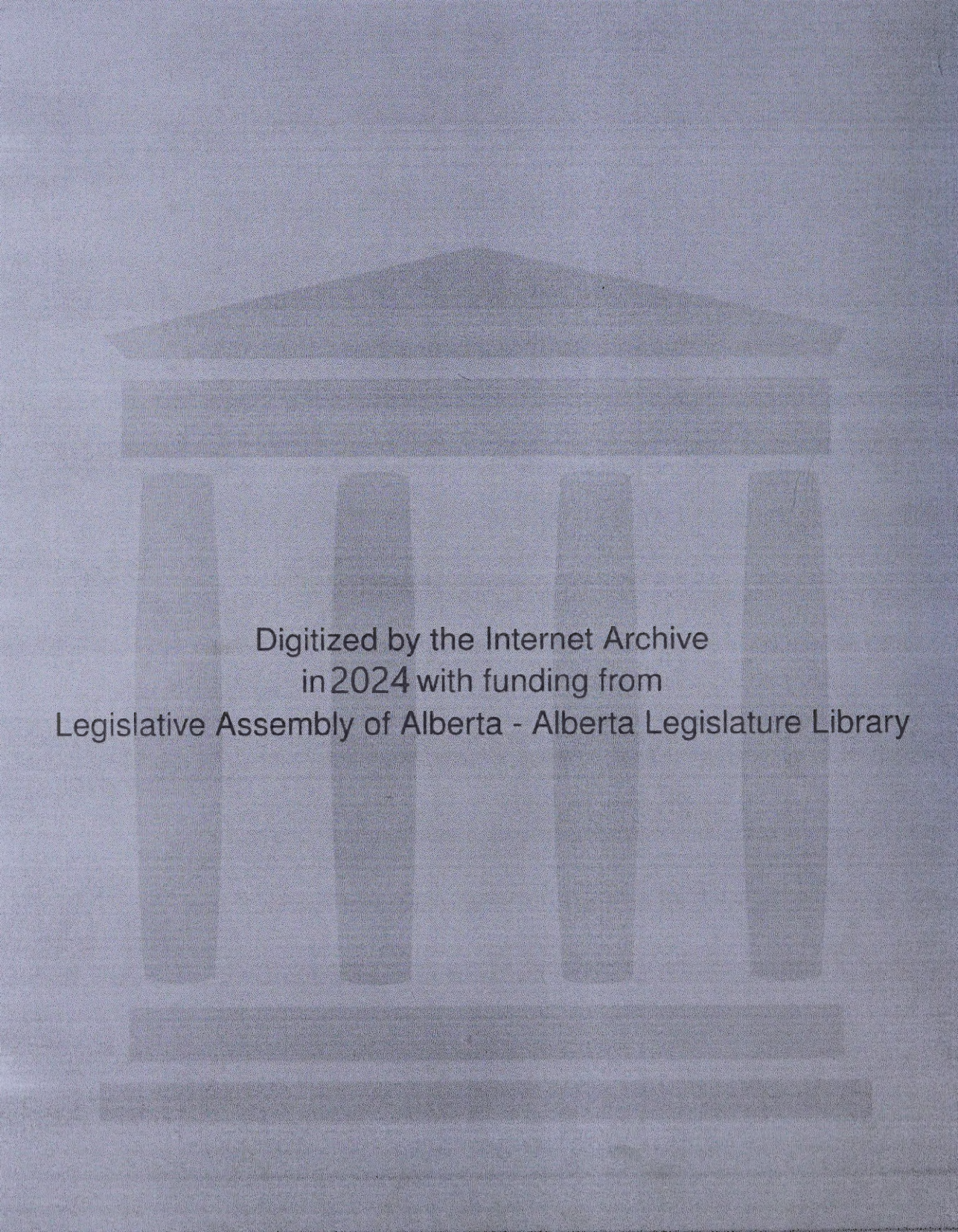


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Rehabilitation Department

Annual Report

1970



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Dr. C.M. Macleod, Q.C.

Chairman

The Workmen's Compensation Board

Province of Alberta

I take pleasure in submitting the
Annual Report of the Rehabilitation Department for the year
1970.

Respectfully submitted,

W. J. SLAVIK

DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION

2 April 1971

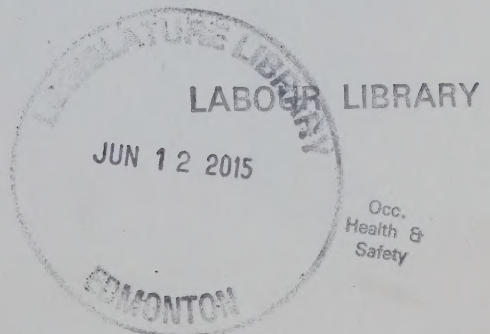


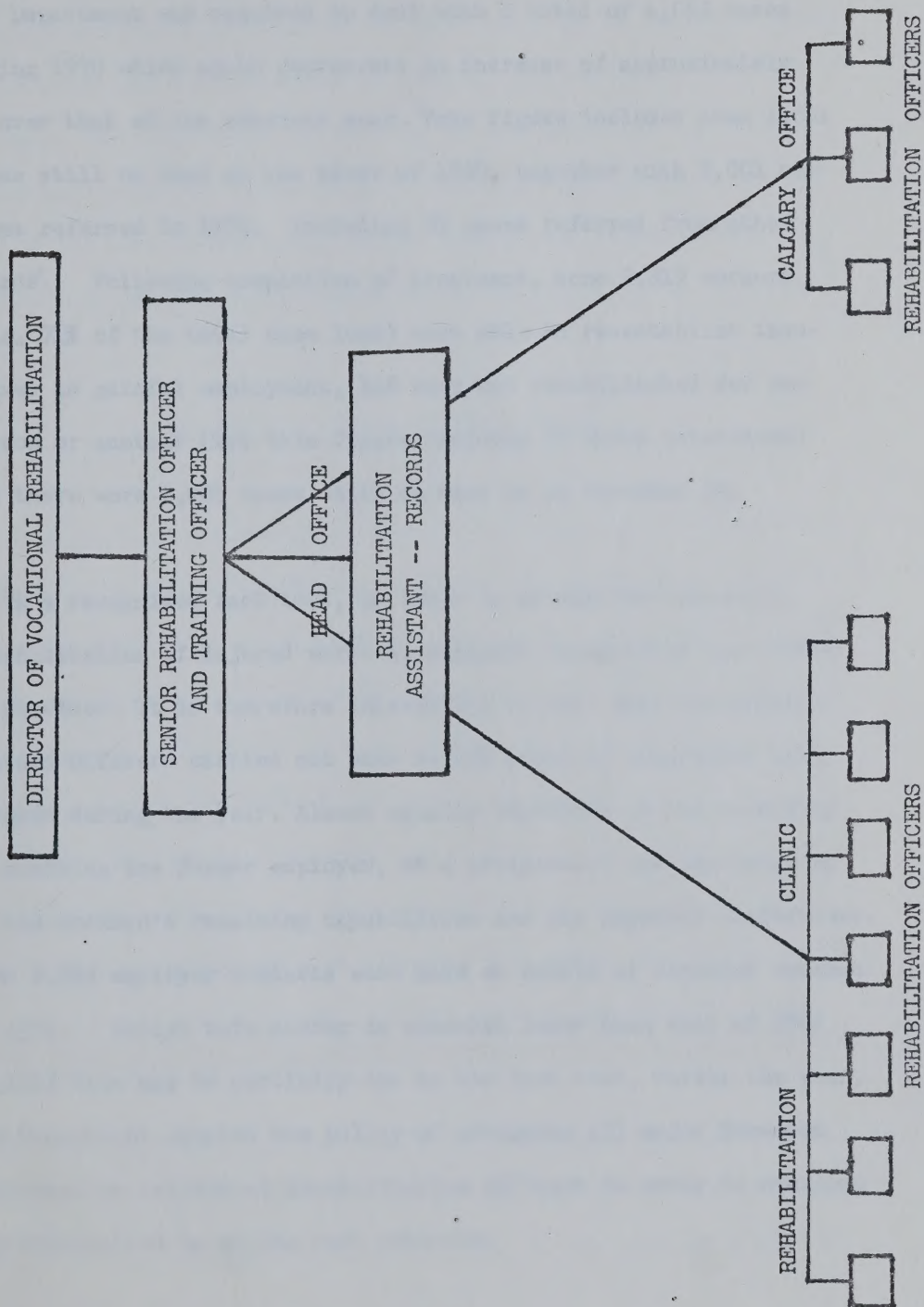
TABLE OF CONTENTS

General Review of the Work of the Department Throughout 1970	Page 1 and 2
Rehabilitation Work at the Clinic.....	Page 2 and 3
Re-Training Review 1970.....	Page 4
Re-Training Survey.....	Page 4 and 5
The Work of the Rehabilitation Officers.....	Page 6
Visits to Totally Disabled Claimants.....	Page 6 and 7
Interview of Widows and Dependents.....	Page 7
Training of Rehabilitation Officers.....	Page 7 and 8
Rehabilitation Directors Conference.....	Page 8
Rehabilitation Manual.....	Page 9
Supplemental Rehabilitation Assistance.....	Page 9 and 10
The Work of the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation.....	Page 10,11 and 12
Forecast.....	Page 12,13,14 and 15
Summarization.....	Page 15

APPENDICES

"A"	Case Referrals and Disposition 1970
"B"	Disposition of Cases Not Rehabilitated
"C"	Disposition of Cases on Hand -- 31 December 1970
"D"	Cases Referred from Other Boards
"E"	Case Interviews 1970
"F"	Employer Contacts 1970
"G"	Field Trips 1970

EDMONTON



GENERAL REVIEW

The Department was required to deal with a total of 4,052 cases during 1970 which again represents an increase of approximately 6% over that of the previous year. This figure includes some 1,051 cases still on hand at the close of 1969, together with 3,001 new cases referred in 1970, including 89 cases referred from other Boards. Following completion of treatment, some 2,819 workers (i.e. 71% of the total case load) were able to re-establish themselves in gainful employment, 148 were not rehabilitated for one reason or another (but this figure includes 77 widow interviews) and there were 1,085 cases still on hand as at December 31.

It is a recognized fact that, in order to accomplish successful rehabilitation of injured workmen, adequate counselling must first be provided. It is therefore interesting to note that the Rehabilitation Officers carried out some 14,758 personal interviews with workmen during the year. Almost equally important is the necessity of advising the former employer, or a prospective new employer, as to the workman's remaining capabilities and his physical limitations. Some 2,032 employer contacts were made on behalf of disabled workmen in 1970. Whilst this number is somewhat lower than that of 1969 (2,225) this may be partially due to the fact that, during the year, the Department adopted the policy of assigning all major Edmonton employers to individual Rehabilitation Officers in order to overcome any duplication in making such contacts.

/2 General Review - continued

Due to the general economic situation, employment possibilities diminished considerably during the past year and it became increasingly difficult to find suitable openings for partially disabled workmen. The fact that, to the best of our knowledge and belief, there were only 164 claimants still awaiting employment at the end of the year speaks well for the work of the Rehabilitation Officers in seeking out suitable employment for injured workmen.

REHABILITATION WORK AT THE CLINIC

All new patients are referred to the Rehabilitation Department for interview on the day following admission to the Clinic. The purpose of this interview is to determine whether the patient has any problems regarding re-employment following completion of treatment. All cases in which there is some significant disability or where it appears that the workman may have a re-employment problem, are referred directly to a Rehabilitation Officer for counselling and assistance; those cases where the injury is of a minor nature which should respond well to treatment and where the workman indicates that his job is secure, are not further interviewed, unless some problem later develops.

This screening process has been carried out under the supervision of the Senior Rehabilitation Officer, Mr. Munro, for the past two years and has proven most satisfactory. It has substantially re-

/3 Rehabilitation Work at the Clinic - continued

duced the case loads of the individual Rehabilitation Officers and permits them to devote more time to difficult cases but ensures that every workman admitted to the Clinic is interviewed, counselled and made aware of the services available from the Rehabilitation Department. In 1970, it was possible to dispose of some 1,370 cases in this manner.

The Rehabilitation Department maintains good liason with the doctors and other members of the Clinic treatment staff. Where recovery appears to be slow and it seems problematical as to whether the patient will regain sufficient function to be able to return to his former job or not, the problem is discussed freely with the attending Clinic doctor. In some cases, it is necessary to request the doctor to refer the patient to the Clinic Psychologist for interview and assessment as to future potential. The results of these interviews and psychological testing greatly assist the Rehabilitation Officers in arriving at a practical solution to the workman's problems.

A rehabilitation officer regularly attends the monthly meetings of the Clinic Medical Evaluation Committee which meets to discuss the progress of long-term cases and recommends changes of treatment, where indicated. The Department is represented at the bi-monthly meetings of the Amputee Team to give advice as to possible employment opportunities. The Department also has a representative on the Medical Board Review Committee which meets each month and in addition, the Rehabilitation Officer concerned attends the meetings of the Cranial Injury Committee, as requested.

RE-TRAINING

During the past year, the Board approved 53 requests for re-training and assistance was extended in 10 cases as follows: -

Training-on-the-job	7
Vocational Training	28
Educational up-grading	9
High School	2
Community College	4
Agricultural College	1
University	11
Correspondence course	1

63

By the end of the year 22 had completed training and were gainfully employed; training was cancelled in one instance as the workman decided to open up a business of his own; 40 were still in training at the end of the year. During the year 9 claimants completed training which had been approved in previous years, all of whom are now engaged in new employment.

RE-TRAINING SURVEY

In order that we might assess and evaluate the Rehabilitation Department Vocational Training program, we recently conducted a mail survey of persons who had received vocational training assistance and completed their training between the years 1960 and 1970.

/5 Re-training Survey - continued

A copy of the statistics of the survey is next under and I believe that it is most enlightening to find that out of a total number surveyed, there were only six presently unemployed which represented a 4.3%.

The majority of the persons canvassed had praise for the Workmen's Compensation Board Vocational Training program and it is my intention to do a full survey report at an early date including some of the replies who were critical about the training provided.

In any case, the survey indicates that the final step in the rehabilitation process, productive employment, is being achieved in the large majority of cases.

The success of the effort must be credited to the work of the Rehabilitation Officers and the close co-operation received from the disabled persons themselves and the excellent work being done by the training agencies and institutions and employers who are willing to hire people with physical disabilities.

I would also like to take this opportunity of thanking the office staff who assisted in this survey, in addition to their regular work. It was an immense task to review the rehabilitation and claim files to obtain the re-training information to be recorded and to total the amounts of the re-training expenditures.

(1960 - 1970)

Workmen retrained	356	ANALYSIS		
Questionnaires sent	210	Workmen employed as trained	82	(58.9%)
Questionnaires returned	139 (66.2%)	Workmen employed in other occupations	54	(38.8%)
Questionnaires not returned	71 (33.8%)	Workmen of the opinion that their re-training assisted them in resuming employment	117	(84.2%)
Questionnaires not sent *	146	Workmen of the opinion that their re-training did not assist them in resuming employment	20	(14.4%)
* Reasons: Training not completed, addresses not available, deceased, et cetera				
COSTS				
Tuition and books	\$78,361.04	Workmen of the opinion that their retraining is of benefit to them in their present work	109	(78.4%)
Rehabilitation Allowance	258,603.51	Workmen of the opinion that their retraining is of no benefit to them in their present work	24	(17.3%)
Total	\$336,964.55	Workmen who provided additional comments	103	(74.1%)
		Workmen who did not provide additional comments	36	(25.9%)
		Workmen who indicated that they were presently unemployed	6	(4.3%)

THE WORK OF THE REHABILITATION OFFICERS

Owing to the steady increase in the number of case referrals during the past year, it was found necessary to relieve Mr. Axtell of his duties as Re-training Officer and to assign a Country district to him. Mr. Munro is now the Re-training Officer and is responsible for the payment of tuition fees and training allowances. Changes were also made in the re-assignment of some of the Country districts in order to provide more even case loads. It was noted that the number of referrals from the Peace River area has been steadily increasing over the past few years.

The average case load of the Rehabilitation Officers working out of the Edmonton office was 313 whilst that of the Calgary Rehabilitation Officers was 312. It is felt that these case loads are still too high for a rehabilitation officer to do a competent job as it is generally conceded that the annual case load of any Rehabilitation Officer should not exceed 275. This is especially true with the employment situation as at the present time when an able-bodied workman has difficulty in finding a job and a partially disabled worker is at a marked disadvantage.

VISITS TO TOTALLY DISABLED CLAIMANTS

Throughout the year, the Rehabilitation Officers made at least one visit to all totally disabled workmen who are still resident in this Province to ascertain the general health of the claimant and any particular needs. Arrangements were made for the repair of

/7 Visits to Totally Disabled Claimants - continued

wheelchairs and other equipment supplied by the Board, where necessary. Such annual visits appear to be greatly appreciated by the pensioners.

INTERVIEW OF WIDOWS AND DEPENDENTS

On the instructions of the Board, the Rehabilitation Officers contacted and interviewed some 77 widows during the past year, advising them as to their various entitlements under the Act and providing counselling and advice as requested. For the most part, these visits appear to be appreciated by the claimants concerned. It has been found that widows often have problems which they are anxious to discuss with the visiting Board representative regarding their actual entitlement under the Act and questions to ask concerning the education of their children, what insurance they should carry, etc.

TRAINING OF REHABILITATION OFFICERS

In March, the Department held its 7th Annual Refresher Seminar for its staff when interesting discussions were held covering a wide variety of topics, including the changes in Claims Department procedures and various aspects of the Rehabilitation process. Then, in addition, in May and June, an intensive three weeks instruction course was arranged for two of our more recently appointed officers who worked with the Rehabilitation Officers at the Clinic each morning

and at the Head Office each afternoon where Mr. Norman and others provided instruction in the many varied approaches to the whole problem of rehabilitation. It was generally felt that this special course had been well worth while.

REHABILITATION DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE

Last February, at the instruction of the Board, a Conference of the Rehabilitation Directors of the Association of the Canadian Workmen's Compensation Boards was held at the Alberta Board's Rehabilitation Clinic in Edmonton, under the joint Chairmanship of Mr. Norman and myself. All Boards were represented with the exception of Prince Edward Island.

A varied list of rehabilitation topics had previously been drawn up for discussion, each representative being given the opportunity not only to express his personal views but also the view point of his particular Board. The general concensus of opinion was that the Conference had been most profitable and that all who attended had learned a great deal from the discussions.

Following the Conference, a complete record of the proceedings was transcribed and copies sent out to all Boards which had participated. At the invitation of the Manitoba Board, it was mutually agreed, subject to the approval of the respective Boards, to hold the next Rehabilitation Conference in Winnipeg in 1972.

At the suggestion of the Board, for the past six months, Mr. Norman has been in the process of compiling and editing a rehabilitation manual which will embody his twenty-five years experience in the field. It is hoped that this manual will serve as a reference and provide guidelines for both present and future members of the department in dealing with the many varied problems which confront a rehabilitation officer from time to time when called upon for assistance and advice in returning disabled workmen to suitable, gainful employment.

SUPPLEMENTAL REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

In those cases where a workman does not have work immediately available upon completion of treatment or where a workman, who has been under treatment for a considerable period, has a job to return to but does not have sufficient funds to carry him over until he receives his first pay cheque or unemployment insurance benefits, the Board has encouraged the Department to provide some financial assistance in order to "bridge the gap". Supplemental payments were also granted in some cases where an old claim was re-activated, when the workman was required to be off work for further medical treatment, but it was found that the rate of compensation would be insufficient to maintain the workman and his family. The Department granted assistance, in addition to total disability compensation, on a "needs" basis following a Rehabilitation Officer interview and investigation. Supplemental allowances were provided in 66 cases throughout 1970 in the total amount of \$11,042.11, at an average

cost of \$167.30 per case, for an average period of two weeks.

THE WORK OF THE DIRECTOR OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

1. General Supervision of the Department

Since Mr. Munro has been in charge of the Rehabilitation Departments services at the Board's Rehabilitation Clinic and Mr. Neely, as Rehabilitation Assistant, summarizes and assigns the new claim referrals at Head Office, the Director has been able to devote time to administrative details. Referral of special cases from both the Claims and Medical Departments has shown a marked increase which require time consuming reviews.

The more difficult cases are interviewed with the Rehabilitation Officer concerned and these arrangements are found to be satisfactory and productive.

Committees to discuss specific training cases are on-going and these include the Rehabilitation Officer making the presentation together with the Senior Rehabilitation Officer and myself.

The Rehabilitation Officers Weekly Report Forms are personally checked in order that I may have a good knowledge of the work activities of each Officer.

Regular staff meetings are held with all Rehabilitation Officers present to discuss any problems or changes in the general policy of the department.

/ 11 The Work of the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation

2. Review of Individual Case Loads

A complete survey of each Rehabilitation Officers case files, including the Calgary Officers , is undertaken every two months. This process allows me to become familiar with all cases being handled and the problems being encountered.

3. Trips to Calgary During 1970

Six trips were made to the Calgary Office to review the rehabilitation files, and to discuss special problem cases with the individual Rehabilitation Officer. Such visits provide the opportunity to discuss general policy and to review the recorded minutes of the meetings held with the Rehabilitation Officers in Edmonton.

4. Review of the P.T.D. Cases

During 1970, 195 such cases were reviewed. Since 38 of these cases are resident outside the Province, the claims files are reviewed in the Department to note any changes. The Rehabilitation Officers interview and present reports on the other 157 cases; these are reviewed to determine any cases which might need to be referred to the Nursing Allowance Committee. At the time of the general review and visits, the Rehabilitation Officers determine the condition of any Board equipment which has been issued to each person, following which the necessary arrangements are made for repair or replacement.

5. Disability Evaluation Committee

This Committee now meets almost daily and the work being done by the Committee, is found to be a most satisfactory and rewarding experience. We are able to more closely review the work of the Rehabilitation Officers and their involvement with the cases considered; we are also alerted about problems or cases which might otherwise be overlooked.

Outside Contacts

Throughout the year, the Director was invited to give talks on the work of the Department to student physiotherapists and to new staff members of our Claims and Accident Prevention staffs.

I was also involved in meeting with groups of first year medical students which was arranged by Dr. Fowler at the Clinic as a community medicine project. There were many meetings with outside agencies, particularly the Social Development Department; Alberta Vocational Training; Small Debts Court officials; the Canadian Paraplegic Association and the Personnel Association of Edmonton.

FORECAST

1. The Board will note that during 1970, the number of rehabilitation referrals has increased by approximately 6% over that of the previous year. This reflects the employment situation, particularly as it effects the older worker whose

age is a barrier to successful rehabilitation, in spite of good motivation. Because of the economic situation, the work of the Rehabilitation Officers has become more demanding. The present recession is likely to be a factor, at least until the early summer of 1971. It is most probable that there will be an increased number of claimants who will require temporary rehabilitation assistance payments and an increase in the numbers requiring training.

2. Placement of Rehabilitation Officers in other branch offices:

(a) Lethbridge --- it is not anticipated that we will need to place a Rehabilitation Officer in this district until such time as more industry opens up in Southern Alberta. At the present time, these cases are being visited by Mr. Carleton or Mr. Brackenbury who make regular trips to the Southern Alberta areas.

(b) Red Deer---There has been a noticeable increase in the number of cases in Central Alberta and it may be that a recommendation will be made to the Board, in the conceivable future, to place a representative in the area. If a Rehabilitation Officer was placed in Red Deer, he would relieve the Calgary Officers of the districts they are presently also serving, north of Calgary.

(c) Grande Prairie - Peace River --- It is apparent, that with new industry moving into this part of the Province, the work of the Rehabilitation Officer covering that area, will continue to increase.

During the period from March to December 1970, the Assessment Department in Grande Prairie dealt with a monthly average of 62 claims and rehabilitation enquiries. Because the Assessment Officers are unable to provide answers, until a telephone call is made to the Edmonton office, this situation does pose problems. This matter has been discussed with Mr. Hickson and he most enthusiastically supports the placement of a Rehabilitation Officer in the area who would be able to deal with some of the enquiries on behalf of our two departments.

It is anticipated that I will be making recommendation to the Board to consider placement of a Rehabilitation Officer in the Grande Prairie office, during the fall of 1971.

3. Training of Rehabilitation Officers

It is proposed that instead of the annual seminars for all Rehabilitation Officers, that an intensive one week refresher course for each of the Calgary Officers will be arranged.

SUMMARIZATION

In conclusion, it is apparent that the work of the Rehabilitation Department will continue to expand. If a Rehabilitation Officer is placed in Northern Alberta, it would be found necessary to recommend an increase of one Rehabilitation Officer to be employed in the Edmonton district. It is contemplated that this additional Rehabilitation Officer would be sufficient to take over the cases, even if a Rehabilitation Officer was later placed in the Red Deer district.

Industry generally has co-operated well in accepting workmen back into employment and this is confirmed by the fact that there were only 164 claimants still awaiting employment at the end of 1970.

I would like to express appreciation to all members of the department and the other departments of the Board for their efforts and co-operation during the past year.

DISTRIBUTION

Board	4	Dr. Hall	1
R.D. Ross.....	1	Mr. Davis.....	1
Mr. Adams.....	1	Mr. Hickson.....	1
Dr. Fowler....	1	Mr. Draayer.....	1

REHABILITATION OFFICER	CASES REFERRED			CASES REHABILITATED			NOT REHABILITATED	CASES ON HAND
	REFERRED	SCREENED OR TRANSFERRED	CASES HANDLED	R.T.W. @ F.E.	R.T.W. @ N.E.	CASES CLOSED		
W. G. MUNRO	1637	1430	207	36	71	107	9	91
M. AXTELL	202	-	202	35	25	60	7	125
J. BRACKENBURY	310	2	308	75	87	162	18	128
B. CARLETON	294	4	290	76	65	141	18	131
P. DEKKER	342	78	264	78	64	142	10	112
D. HARDMAN	321	80	241	77	69	146	15	80
W. KAPLER	339	6	333	131	68	199	20	114
R. LEENDERS	329	22	307	96	79	175	20	112
E. MORRISON	320	6	314	65	99	164	20	130
E. WIGGINS	310	94	216	105	48	153	11	52
TOTALS	4404	1722	2682	774	675	1449*	148	1085

NOTE:** This figure does not include some 229 workmen who had returned to work on a temporary award and are still being followed up for work assessment purposes.

DISPOSITION OF CASES NOT REHABILITATED

REHAB. OFFICER	RETIRED	UNEMPLOYABLE	DECEASED	WIDOWS	TOTAL
W. G. MUNRO	1	1	3	4	9
M. AXTELL	4	-	1	2	7
J. BRACKENBURY	4	-	2	12	18
B. CARLETON	3	3	3	9	18
P. DEKKER	2	-	3	5	10
D. HARDMAN	2	4	-	9	15
W. KAPLER	8	1	4	7	20
R. LEENDERS	6	-	3	11	20
E. MORRISON	4	1	3	12	20
E. WIGGINS	1	1	3	6	11
TOTALS	35	11*	25	77	148

NOTE: * This figure does not include Permanent Total Disability Cases which are kept open from year to year.

REHABILITATION OFFICER	UNDER TREATMENT	R.T.W. ON TEMP. AWARD	PERM. TOTAL DISABILITY	IN TRAINING	WIDOWS NOT YET SEEN	AWAITING EMPLOYMENT	TOTAL
W. MUNRO	13	7	57	7	-	7	91
M. AXTELL	50	40	18	6	-	21	135
J. BRACKENBURY	55	27	10	8	2	26	128
B. CARLETON	54	33	26	4	-	14	131
P. DEKKER	46	36	20	-	-	10	112
D. HARDMAN	34	10	11	5	2	18	80
W. KAPLER	66	19	7	10	1	11	114
R. LEENDERS	44	27	20	4	-	17	112
E. MORRISON	41	26	18	11	1	33	130
E. WIGGINS	33	4	8	-	-	7	52
TOTALS	436	229	195	55 *	6	164	1085

NOTE: * This figure includes 34 cases in training under Board sponsorship and additional 21 cases in training under the sponsorship of other agencies.

CASES REFERRED FROM OTHER BOARDS

During the past year, there was a slight increase in the number of cases referred from other Boards, bringing the total more in line with that of earlier years.

PROVINCE	1968	1969	1970
N.W. Territories	30	29	34
Yukon Territory	20	12	15
Saskatchewan	27	18	19
British Columbia	13	10	14
Manitoba	2	2	1
Ontario	5	2	6
New Brunswick	-	1	-
TOTALS	97	74	89

REHABILITATION OFFICER	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JUL.	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	TOTAL
M. AXTELL	127	120	102	89	173	200	146	108	26	141	162	194	1588
J. BRACKENBURY	125	105	110	99	110	43	127	26	108	135	111	81	1180
B. CARLETON	104	97	99	91	144	107	77	100	78	141	100	113	1251
H.P. DEKKER	16	61	70	97	122	118	132	75	118	143	112	165	1229
D. HARDMAN	134	136	116	127	154	143	138	148	145	102	142	160	1645
W. KAPLER	128	122	111	127	119	121	116	47	101	117	108	129	1346
R. LEENDERS	127	109	112	120	134	111	140	128	84	75	117	103	1365
E. MORRISON	162	138	129	132	198	120	118	169	183	202	159	153	1863
W. MUNRO	219	225	185	183	156	78	154	117	137	176	178	193	2001
E. WIGGINS	100	104	98	90	115	103	140	125	126	150	25	114	1290
TOTALS	1242	1217	1132	1155	1425	1144	1288	1043	1106	1382	1214	1410	14758

REHABILITATION OFFICER	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
M. AXTELL	34	35	36	22	21	15	24	7	3	19	16	21	253
J. BRACKENBURY	26	20	29	15	19	10	30	5	33	28	22	27	264
B. CARLETON	9	5	7	15	22	22	13	14	13	24	15	21	180
H. DEKKER	1	2	6	6	7	17	7	6	18	15	17	30	132
D. HARDMAN	24	11	22	11	34	19	13	29	14	15	10	9	211
W. KAPLER	16	17	16	15	10	23	16	5	25	20	23	25	211
R. LEENDERS	20	21	21	27	22	27	27	26	12	14	20	32	269
E. MORRISON	24	29	31	22	42	17	21	23	43	39	47	33	371
W. MUNRO	-	2	1	1	2	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	8
E. WIGGINS	16	8	13	5	12	10	10	12	16	16	6	9	133
TOTALS	170	150	182	139	191	160	162	128	177	190	176	207	2032

REHABILITATION OFFICER	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
M. AXTELL											T	T	2
J. BRACKENBURY	T	2T	T	T	T		2T		2T	T	T		12
B. CARLETON		T	T	2T	T	T	T	T	T	T	2T	T	13
H. DEKKER								T	T	2T	T	T	6
D. HARDMAN	T		2T	T	2T	T	T	T	2T	T	T	T	14
W. KAPLER	T	T		2T		T	T		T	T	T	T	10
R. LEENDERS	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	2T	T		2T		12
E. MORRISON	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
W. MUNRO	-	-	-	-	-	T	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
E. WIGGINS	T		T		T	T			T				5
TOTALS	5	5	6	7	6	6	6	5	9	6	9	5	75

